



Viking Saga



NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL

GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

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The story of proms past

By Emelia Richling

For decades, high school proms have been an annual tradition, characterized as an evening of elegant dresses, freshly-crowned royalty and sleek limousines. However, as some Northwest teachers remember it, their evening wasn't nearly as picturesque.

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Northwest english teacher Natalie Starostka attends her senior prom.



Photo Courtesy of Natalie Starostka

Student Section

Find out why the student section is an important part of games and school spirit!



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Is the northwest shipyard sinking?

By Danyka Galvan



When thinking of sports, you probably picture the lineup of teams in perfect uniform, preparing to take on what the game brings. Coaches give pep talks, cheerleaders stand on the sidelines and the bleachers are maxed out with a seemingly endless

crowd. The spectators are pumped up shouting and cheering in support of their team. The atmosphere is unlike any other, making for sentimental high school memories.

Take the Olympics for example. During the weeks of the event, the whole world gathers to watch and support a number of athletes of their choice. Crowd members are encouraged to stay and watch lesser-known sports to have a crowd at events such as gymnastics and track.

In the past at Northwest, we have had an excellent student section. Our school spirit is what has built our shipyard to be so strong. However, this year there has been a lack of participation during many of our events. Especially for activities such as swim, cross country, and even sports like girls basketball and wrestling.

But why are these sports also considered important for crowd involvement? No matter the sport there is proven psychological benefits to having a supportive crowd. Support of any kind can lift the spirits of the athlete to do better. Not only is this for sports but even in everyday activities. Getting praised for working hard makes that person want to keep up the effort, because they are receiving approval.

Imagine being an athlete. Your blood is pumping. The only thought in mind is beating the other team. You have an entire crowd there to support players and lift their spirits to victory. With a smaller, unenthused crowd the energy is drained.

The athlete can still play to the best of their ability, however, it is not the same as hearing the chants of support.

There is a story about a girl who was on the track team but only wanted to throw shot put. However, one day her coach was in need of someone to compete in the mile and she was the only available candidate. She started out strong but quickly fell to last place. Everyone had completed the race and she still had one lap to do. Her brother had just got done with long jump so he started running with her. Suddenly she gained the strength and energy to run faster and complete her last lap. Once she gained support and knew that somebody was cheering for her, she was able to compete to the best of her ability even if she knew she was last.

When one team is designated home, they are more likely to have a larger crowd. This is because it is more convenient to be able to make it to home games. For NW our away games tend to leave the bleachers nearly empty. Towards the beginning of the year there were students who were unaware of whether or not with COVID, we were allowed to have a student section, thus decreasing the attendance at games.

Fans in the stands add a lot more importance to the game. Not only can a crowd affect a team's performance, but they can also get a certain player distracted to help the other team gain advantage. When a player is on the free-throw line all the attention is set on one person. The team's fans will chant and encourage them to do their best while the other team's fans can distract the player, causing them to miss the shot.

By growing our attendance at all NW sports, we can improve our school spirit. The atmosphere at games would be much more fun and exciting to add great memories. If more people participated in joining our school's event's we could lead our teams to victory to make more memorable high school experiences with an "Olympic" atmosphere.

VIKING SAGA

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VikingMedia



Northwest's review on StudySync: A or F?

By Lydia Vlcek

StudySync is a curriculum that is similar to Google Classroom, but instead of teachers having to create assignments, StudySync provides premade assignments for them in a program online.

Before StudySync, Northwest didn't have much of an english curriculum. Last summer, the school decided to purchase a professional program to help enhance students learning experience.

That being said, having a new platform for assignments doesn't mean all students are attached to StudySync.

"Some parts are good, some parts are bad," said Sophomore Cecily McGuan. "The way they do quizzes is bad. You can't see what you got right until you get it in time [that the teachers had it due]. But, it is nice because it's all in one spot."

"I like the way StudySync is formatted," said Senior Dalton Starr. "I hate the videos with the really bad actors. It's my least favorite part of StudySync."

However, there are students like Jalynn Myers who think there are no pros. "I don't like it. It's confusing and annoying," she said.

English teacher Alex Hull also voiced his thoughts on StudySync. "Once we have it in place for a couple of years, it'll be a good tool."

After figuring out where StudySync went wrong, the interviewed people thought about how to fix the problems that held StudySync back.

"I think I'd like the materials to more closely match the examples we do in class," Hull said. "I feel like the test doesn't always match the things we've practiced in the lesson."

"I think that StudySync needs to hire better actors and they need to define things in more detail," Starr said.

StudySync certainly has its pros and cons. However, there are other programs that the internet has to offer. Should we take an alternative to StudySync, or should we stick with what we have?

"We really should branch out more [to other curriculums]," McGuan said. "It's good to have a variety. Some students learn as well online as they will on paper, like me, especially with reading. The words just turn into jumbles [online]."

Starr disagreed. "I feel like we should stick with it. Other than bad actors, whoever created it knows what they're doing," he said.

"I think it all depends on the needs of the curriculum and the students," Hull said. "Once we figure out what we're doing, we'll figure out where we have gaps."

Cancel culture or taking accountability?

By Meghan Pennell

"These books portray people in ways that are hurtful and wrong," said Dr. Seuss Enterprises in a statement released March 2, 2021. "Ceasing sales of these books is only part of our commitment and our broader plan to ensure Dr. Seuss Enterprises's catalog represents and supports all communities and families."

Theodore Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, has been using outdated racial cliches for a majority of his career, dating back to some of his earliest political cartoons. In the books being pulled, Geisel's features a crude portrait of an Asian man with slanted eyes, two African American men barefoot and plenty other examples of prejudice.

It could be said this is just one example of an outrageous cancel culture, but when do we establish the line between cancel culture and holding someone accountable for their actions? Geisel's books have had an enormous impact on virtually everyone's childhood, including his racist imagery.

An article published by Dr. Courtney S. Warren, a board-certified clinical psychologist at the University of Nevada School of Medicine, states "Our cultural environment(s) teach us the traits and characteristics of people that are deemed more desirable and less desirable largely based on who has the most power. We learn these cultural values whether we are consciously aware of it or not."

A 2019 survey of Seuss's works found that just 2% of human characters were people of color — 98% were white. Growing up these

books are practically shoved down children's throats and the majority of those calling this another "extreme example of cancel culture" are predominantly white, meaning they've never had to face the internal and external struggles of seeing these caricatures of themselves at such a young age.

No one is born racist. It's taught unconsciously from an early age and with examples as seemingly insignificant as the ones in a few of Geisel's works, it's practically impossible to avoid. The media children consume impacts their world view for the rest of their lives.

Geisel hasn't even been "canceled." Only six of his books are being pulled, and they're being pulled by Dr. Seuss Enterprises's own decision with genuine intentions, realizing the impact these books have.

We can still enjoy his more appropriate and influential works while recognizing that he wasn't the perfect author and person that children are often taught he is.



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"The Owl House": Host to Disney's first queer heroine of color

By Audrey Wiseman

For a long time, Disney and other big entertainment companies pushed heteronormativity hard (heteronormativity being defined as the concept of heterosexuality and gender roles being the "norm.") Queer characters were few and far between, receiving little screentime, and were often never confirmed so in canon (canon being defined as the confirmed events occurring within a work itself.) This was (and still is) particularly common among animated children's content.

That was until January 10, 2020, the Disney Channel premier date of animated show "The Owl House," created by Dana Terrace, starring Sarah-Nicole Robles as Luz Noceda, Disney's first bisexual Hispanic female lead. This fact would be later confirmed on August 15, 2020, along with a developing queer relationship between her and another female character.

"The Owl House" follows Luz as she navigates the Boiling Aisles, which she enters accidentally through a dimensional portal in the human world. While there, she discovers a passion for magic and trains to be a witch (despite her biological inability to do so, as humans and witches are two different species.) Luz has misadventures with her mentor, Eda the Owl Lady, also known as the most powerful witch on the Boiling Aisles, and their small cuddly roommate King, or "The King of Demons," as he prefers to call himself. Luz makes friends with two witches attending a magic school called Hexside, named Willow and Gus. At first enemies with Amity, an uppity witch student, she eventually befriends her as well.

The show's main target audience is children and teens, like many other shows on Disney XD, where it now airs. However, because of its depiction of queer characters and romance, it appeals to a much broader audience which includes queer adults as well.

Throughout the series, I and many others picked up on references to Luz's sexuality and Amity's painfully obvious crush on her. From Luz's quote "I've got a new crush and her name is education!" to Amity's self-talking quote "So you two go to the same school now, that doesn't change anything!" to direct references like the entirety of episodes 15, 16 and 17, "Understanding Willow," "Enchanting Grom Fright" and "Wing it Like Witches" respectively, these clues, hints and references are littered all throughout the series. "Enchanting Grom Fright" is an exceptionally good example, due to its consistency of pure fanservice.

This is a big step for Disney, and one that hasn't gone unappreciated. Fans everywhere are raving. The show's depiction of characters that don't fit into the heteronormative mold continues to reel in new viewers. However, the show has much more to offer outside of representation.

First, the show's animation is wonderful. It's smooth and the characters' designs are pleasant and clever. Their environment complements and contrasts them well, too. Even background characters have visible effort put into them. Lighting, angles, music and sequences always fit their placements as well.

Second, the characters all have believable, fleshed out backstories, development and unique personalities. Each one is relatable, even the villains, who all have clear motives. Most of the show's bad guys are more than cardboard cutouts of evil, such as Amity, Boscha the school bully, and Lilith, Eda's sister who wants to capture her for reasons I can't say here lest I give out spoilers. The list goes on further.

Third, the show has a good balance between humor and drama, making viewers cry as hard as they laugh. The bait and switch is a favorite tactic of Terrace and the crew, luring fans with wholesome content before immediately gut-punching them with angst. Yet we love every second because of the grace with which they do it. This is absolutely a direct callout to episodes 18 and 19, "Agony of a Witch" and "Young Blood, Old Souls" respectively. I still cry about them.

All in all, "The Owl House," available on Disney+ and the Disney XD channel, is an outstanding show. The second season is scheduled to air some time this year, so I highly recommend watching the first season now. You won't regret it.



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Band ends on high note at state capitol

By Emily Krupicka

Echoes of melodic instrumentals could be heard bouncing off the rotunda walls at the Nebraska State Capitol building. Looking below, tile ceilings watched as the Northwest High School wind ensemble began with its first note, instruments carefully positioned in front of each member.

The wind ensemble has performed at the Capitol years before, but students believe the performance this year was especially significant.

"Last year, due to COVID-19, we missed out on a lot of opportunities," said senior flute player Melissa Chihuahua. "This year, we really wanted to perform for a live audience, so I'm very thankful that we can play live at the Capitol, especially during my senior year."

Although a unique experience for students to partake in, the band's performance transcends into more than just a musical opportunity. Showcasing their talents to Nebraska senators — like Curt Friesen, Tom Briese and Ray Aguilar — is just as impactful.

"It's important for us to remind legislators — in their funding and voting — that music education is important, and it's crucial for us to do this in a real, tangible way," said band director Shawn Pfanstiel.

Despite having less than three weeks to put together the show, the 30-minute concert was well-received by spectators with onlookers admiring the professionalism of the band.

"Performing in Lincoln is important," said junior tuba player Carter Fogle. "We can show our style of playing to a different crowd, rather than just parents and friends."

Pfanstiel agrees, adding that the opportunity was a special distinction.

"Being able to perform is an honor and very symbiotic," he said. "Our wind ensemble was selected among statewide auditions, and we are acting as ambassadors for music education in the state of Nebraska."

The band's performance is a testimony to the importance of school music programs. Each student's dedication to their craft exemplifies the significance that music holds in all aspects, and, in order to get this message across, students rehearsed and adjusted to perfect their playing.

"We've been cracking down on sections that give us trouble," Fogle said. "After that, we work on how we can be musical with every note we play."

Chihuahua also emphasized the effort that each student put forward in order to make their performance a success.

"I'm proud of everyone who participated because we all worked so hard," she said. "The entire concert went very well, and it was a great experience for all of us."

Two schools co-op with NW soccer

By Gabriel Lorenzo

The Northwest boys' and girls' soccer teams welcome Grand Island Central Catholic and Wood River. They were going to play last year but due to COVID-19, this will be their first season together.

"Co-oping means that girls and boys from other schools come here to play certain sports and then we send kids also to other sports [like tennis, swimming and baseball]," said girls' head soccer coach Jessica Herrmann.

There are two players from Wood River and ten from GICC on the boys' soccer team. On the girls' side, there are seven from Wood River and two from GICC.

Preparation for the season requires early practice. The boys started conditioning in January. Around 20 students participated, showing their excitement. The girls have also been preparing for this season.

"We've done a lot of stuff in the off-season because we have had such a long break," Herrmann said. "I'm excited that we actually got to be outside, especially [with] some of the restrictions loosening. It starts to feel like it's getting back to normal."

As NW expands its soccer program, there are benefits that help strengthen the team's connection like establishing relationships with their teammates.

"We get to meet a lot of other new people and play with friends from a whole different perspective," said senior Makenna Westerby.

Last October, a group of boys from GICC and Northwest competed in a tournament called Oktoberfest, which took place in Omaha.

"[The] boys won that tournament, so [students] have got together with other schools and been able to play together," said boys' head soccer coach Ann Purdy.

"We were going to have a really good year last year and [now] we're excited about this year."



The boys got first place in the Oktoberfest competition on October 30.
Photo Courtesy of Ann Purdy

The story of proms past:

Teachers remember their fairy-tale (or not so much) evening

By Emelia Richling

For decades, high school proms have been an annual tradition, characterized as an evening of elegant dresses, freshly-crowned royalty and sleek limousines. However, as some Northwest teachers remember it, their evening wasn't nearly as picturesque.

For health science teacher Anthony LaRosa, his day wasn't quite as magical.

"It was a pretty typical day," LaRosa said.

He went about his usual activities, like napping and showering, before he left for "homecoming without the ninth and tenth graders," as he describes prom.

Although certainly not the pinnacle of his high school experience, LaRosa did create some memories, including watching a hypnotist entrance the crowd into making funny animal noises.

However, English teacher Darbie Mazour did create some magical memories, recalling her evening closely aligning to a fairy tale.

"I was able to attend all four years," Mazour said. "At my high school, you could go freshman, sophomore, junior and senior year."

Although every grade was able to attend the dance, only juniors and seniors were allowed to eat a special meal before prom raised by the local farming

community and served by the junior parents.

After the banquet, prom was held in the high school's largest gym. Junior students were allowed out of school the Thursday and Friday before prom to decorate.

"My junior year the theme was Crystal Nights," Mazour said. "It didn't feel like you were walking into a gym. There were crystal icebergs with penguins on them and water. It was really elaborate and magical."

As prom drew to an end, Mazour topped off the night and her hairdo with a crown, reigning in her story as queen.

Math teacher Lindsey Harders and careers teacher Chip Bahe shared a similar fairytale ending.

"I took my wife to both my proms," Bahe said. "We had a really good time together."

For the three years Harders attended prom, her date was also the person she would later call her spouse.

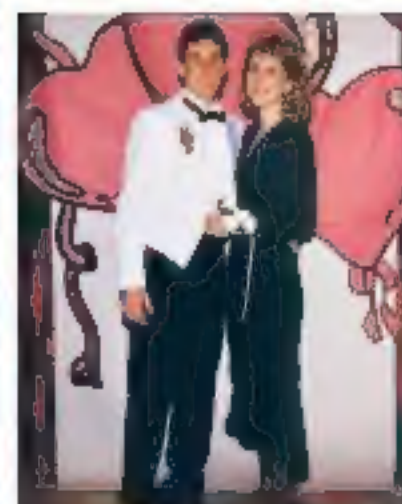
Both Bahe's and Harders' real-life fairytale lasted for more than just an evening as their prom dates became their partners for life.

Harders left a piece of advice, encouraging students to not make any excuses about the night.

"Go have fun, make memories and dance."



Proms coordinator in Katrina Bahe's senior year, Katrina Bahe (right) stands with her date for junior prom in 1997 at Genoa High School. The theme was Like No Other Night, reminding students how special the evening of prom really is.



Proms coordinator in Katrina Bahe's senior year, Katrina Bahe (right) 1998 senior prom in Genoa, she poses with her date. Based on the song "In This Love" by White Snake, the gym was decorated with hearts and red streamers.

Once upon a time...



Proms coordinator in Scott Johnson's senior year, Scott Johnson (left) stands with his date from Central Catholic at the 1987 Northwest prom. It was held at The Portage, a venue with a dance floor and an upper level for refreshments.



Proms coordinator in Megan Miller's senior year, Megan Miller (right) poses with the prom king. The theme was Destination Cadenza with waterfalls and a realistic shipwreck.



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Ginny and Georgia: The new-age Gilmore Girls?

By Emelia Richling



In Netflix's recently released 10-episode series "Ginny and Georgia," a mother, Georgia, and her two children, Ginny and Austin, move to an uppity town in Massachusetts. Georgia is determined to fit in, emulating her neighbors' far too pristine houses and perfect lifestyles.

As a single mother fighting for the life-savings of her suspiciously deceased husband, Georgia creates an interesting character who attempts to blend in, while still maintaining her Southern charm. The tension is thick throughout the storyline because Ginny is dedicated to put down roots, something her mother struggles to do.

However, the plot is marred by more than just tension. With underdeveloped relationships between characters and plot holes larger than my will to watch the show, it seems that "Ginny and Georgia" mashed together every problem teens might face into a hand-

ful of one-hour episodes. The show was an attempt to relate to younger viewers, but it failed, creating unbelievable characters and an out-of-touch teenage representation.

While watching "Ginny and Georgia," the parallels between the comedy-drama "Gilmore Girls" are clear. The latter is a seven-season show also featured on Netflix, running from 2000-2007.

The two shows are undeniably similar, sharing the single mother raising a child at a young age, the relationship developing with the restaurant owner and the storybook town dwelling in New England. Yet, "Ginny and Georgia" fails to capture the witty dialogue and interesting character development of "Gilmore Girls."

If you are craving a show with a mixture of drama and humor as well as the character trope of a single mother raising her teenage daughter to face the struggles of reality, turn away from "Ginny and Georgia" and settle down with "Gilmore Girls."

Obtained from IMDb

The Queen's Gambit: The show that checks all the boxes

By Emily Krupicka

For most, an arrangement of 64 squares toppled under 32 playing pieces doesn't stimulate the intoxication of thrill and anticipation; however, the Netflix original "The Queen's Gambit" challenges the notion of what defines a popular drama series.

The story follows Beth Harmon (played by Anya Taylor-Joy), an ambitious chess prodigy who grapples with the pressures of pleasing her critics and the influences of intolerable addictions. To cope with a traumatic childhood, Harmon turns to alcohol and tranquilizer pills to numb her uneasiness; hookups and unrequited love to fill the void of undependable relationships; and chess boards and pawns to add consistencies to her life.

After being placed into the Methuen Home, an orphanage, Harmon encounters Mr. Shaibel, the custodian and man who introduces her to chess. Following Harmon's first interactions with Mr. Shaibel, she begins to visualize the game, playing against her own mind. To illustrate this, the camera shifts to the ceiling, revealing a massive chess board.

During each match, Harmon's eyes flick between pieces to calculate potential moves of her opponent, giving insight into her intelligence.

This seven-episode series is based off Walter Tevis' novel of the same name, but Scott Frank, the series' director and producer, carefully crafted a visionary tale that has never been seen. The screenwriting is detailed in thought and examines the fine line between dedication and obsession.

Taylor-Joy's acting should also be applauded for its authenticity. Her portrayal of Harmon was genuine, allowing the audience to empathize with her character.

"The Queen's Gambit" is a refreshing storyline that differentiates itself from any other Netflix original. The cinematography was entrancing, another instrument to the complexity of the production. In a show like this — with character development, artistic executions and brilliant acting—there's no doubt it can appeal to a wide range of audiences.



Obtained from Netflix

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By Reagan Kropatsch



ALEXIS DOUGLAS

What is your favorite high school memory?

"I don't really have a favorite memory because I don't enjoy high school, but I do enjoy being with my friends."

Did you develop senioritis? What keeps you motivated?

"I've grown more restless than anything. I'm ready for the next chapter in my life. My close friends are a huge help with keeping me focused on my schoolwork and keeping up with my chaotic wonders of my future."

What is the hardest part of being a senior?

"The hardest part is coming to peace with knowing how different life will be after high school. We get into a comfort zone, and thinking about that coming to an end can be stressful."

What is your best advice for underclassmen?

"My best advice is to get your homework done as soon as possible. Enjoy your time with limited responsibilities."

Photo Courtesy of Alexis Douglas



JACK CLINE

What is your favorite high school memory?

"Winning the first grand champ of my high school career with 14K my junior year."

Did you develop senioritis? What keeps you motivated?

"I never developed senioritis. I have six music classes, so I spend most of the day making music. The biggest thing that keeps me motivated is what's to come after high school, such as college."

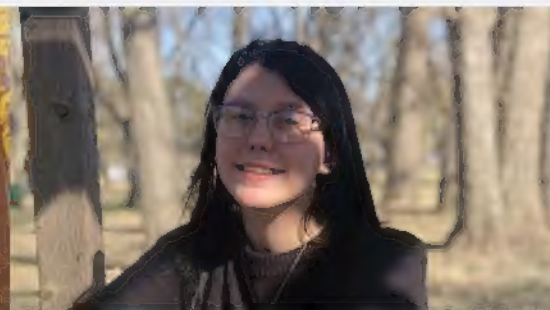
What is the hardest part of being a senior?

"Getting in all of your scholarships and just pushing through that last year."

What is your best advice for underclassmen?

"Take time to just enjoy high school. It flies by."

Photo Courtesy of Sgt Jiggy's Photography



TAYTUM CRAMER

What is your favorite high school memory?

"Going to high school games."

Did you develop senioritis? What keeps you motivated?

"Yes very much, but my boyfriend helps keep me motivated."

What is the hardest part of being a senior?

"Showing up to school."

What is your best advice for underclassmen?

"Enjoy high school. It goes faster than you think."

Photo Courtesy of Taytum Cramer

In the news...

By Lydia Vlcek

- Tennessee has high precipitation rates of up to eight inches of rain, causing floods that have already claimed four people's lives. More rain is on the way.
- As of March 19, the CDC recently released a statement saying that students in school can now be spaced 3ft apart instead of the original 6ft if masks are being required.
- Laws in New York have now legalized recreational marijuana for adults over the age of 21, making it the 15th state to fully legalize marijuana. The use of medical marijuana in New York is now also being widely expanded upon.

- The officer Derek Chauvin who allegedly murdered George Floyd is now being tried March 29th on a Monday in Minneapolis. Chauvin is charged with second- and third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter in Floyd's death. If he is found guilty, Chauvin will spend up to 40 years in prison.
- As of March 24, it was confirmed by North and South Korea that North Korea had launched two short range ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan. This is further tipping the tension between the U.S. and North Korea. The Biden Team, unlike Trump, are taking a more business-like approach to the

missile launchings.

- The enormous cargo ship called "Ever Given" weighing in at 200,000 metric tons and having a length of 1,300 ft has finally been freed from the Suez Canal. The ship had been blown over into the canal due to high winds, and it was stuck there for nearly 6 days disrupting the global shipping industry until it was finally able to float once again to unclog the canal.



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